

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GUATEM 03526 151747Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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INFO AEMBASSY MANAGUA 5635
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GUATEMALA 3526

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SHUM, GT
SUBJ: SEVENTEEN SOLDIERS DEAD IN PANZOS REPRISAL

1. ARMY BULLETIN ISSUED LATE JUNE 14 REVEALED THAT AN ARMY TRUCK CARRYING MOBILE MILITARY POLICE (PMA'S) TO AND FROM GUARD STATIONS IN GUATEMALA CITY BLEW UP EARLIER THAT EVENING. AT LEAST 17 SOLDIERS DIED; SEVEN MORE WERE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED. EXPLOSION WAS CAUSED BY CLAYMORE-TYPE DEVICE APPARENTLY DETONATED ELECTRICALLY.

2. COMMUNIST PARTY (PGT), IN APPARENTLY AUTHENTIC BULLETIN RECEIVED BY MEDIA SAME EVENING, HAS TAKEN CREDIT FOR THE INCIDENT IN REPRISAL FOR THE MAY 29 CAMPESINO KILLINGS IN PANZOS. (ANONYMOUS PHONE CALLS TO MEDIA REPRESENTED INCIDENT AS AN EGP OPERATION, BUT NO SUBSEQUENT CONFIRMATION APPEARED). BULLETIN STATES THAT THE PGT'S "REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE" SILL DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE ARMY RANK-AND-FILE, ITSELF OF CAMPESINO ORIGIN, AND THE "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ELITE"
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PAGE 02 GUATEM 03526 151747Z

GROUPS, DEFINED AS PMA'S, RANGERS (KAIBILES) AND WHAT IT TERMS "SECRET MILITARY AND CIVILIAN CORPS." IT LINKS GOVERNMENTAL REPRESSION TO "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM" AND MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS.

3. COMMENT. BY GUATEMALAN STANDARDS, THE ARMY HAS BEEN THE OBJECT OF UNPRECEDENTED PUBLIC CRITICISM OVER PANZOS.

SOME SORT OF LEFTIST REPRISAL FOR PANZOS WAS TO BE EXPECTED, BUT MOST OBSERVERS THOUGHT IT WOULD COME FROM THE EGP. THE COMMUNISTS (BESET BY FACTIONALISM AND UNDER PRESSURE FROM ACTION-ORIENTED MEMBERS) APPARENTLY BEAT THEIR MORE MILITANT RIVAL TO THE PUNCH. THE QUESTION IS NOW HOW THE VERY LAME DUCK LAUGERUD ADMINISTRATION AND ITS SUCCESSOR WILL RESPOND. MILITARY PRESSURE FOR REPRESSIVE ACTION IS LIKELY; AND UNLIKE THE EGP WHOSE MEMBERSHIP IS A WELL-KEPT SECRET, THE PGT IS VULNERABLE TO DIRECT REPRISAL.

4. THE PGT'S RATIONALE FOR SINGLING OUT THE PMA'S SMACKS SOMEWHAT OF SOPHISTRY IN THAT THEY ARE AS INDIAN AND CAMPESINO IN ORIGIN AS REGULAR TROOPS AND ARE EMPLOYED MOSTLY AS WATCHMEN. TO THE EXTENT THE PMA'S ARE WIDELY CONSIDERED TO BE USED BY RURAL LANDOWNERS (PRIVATE PARTIES CAN HIRE PMA'S FROM THE ARMY) TO KEEP UNRULY CAMPESINOS IN LINE, HOWEVER, THE DISTINCTION MAKES SOME PROPAGANDA SENSE.
ANDREWS

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